



News Release

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Mine Rescue Day honors first responders in mine emergencies *300 rescue teams stand ready for 13k mines nationwide*

ARLINGTON, Va. – Mine rescuers often travel miles in the dark, navigating underground mine workings filled with debris, amid poisonous and explosive gases trying to find missing miners or recover those who have died. The dangerous work they do after mine fires, explosions or cave-ins is challenging, grueling, and remarkably – it is voluntary.

On Friday, Oct. 30, the [U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration](#) honors the commitment and sacrifice made by these first responders in its third annual [Mine Rescue Day](#). The day is set aside to promote the importance of mine rescue and acknowledge the teams of people – both past and present – who have responded to mine emergencies.

“The number of times that mine rescuers have placed their own safety and lives at risk to save others during our mining history is staggering,” said [Joseph A. Main](#), assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “These brave men and women undertake some of the most difficult and risky emergency response work, under some of the most arduous and treacherous conditions.”



On Oct. 30, the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration honors mine rescuers, past and present, who put themselves at risk to help others when mine disasters strike.

Currently in the U.S., about 300 mine rescue teams are certified and equipped to perform mine rescue operations. Rescuers train in first aid, firefighting and emergency communications, and compete in mine rescue competitions nationwide to sharpen their skills and ready themselves for an actual mine emergency.

The date chosen for Mine Rescue Day has historic significance. On Oct. 30, 1911, [Dr. Joseph A. Holmes](#) organized the first national mine rescue demonstration at Forbes Field in Pittsburgh. In 1910, President William Howard Taft appointed Holmes as the first director of the U.S. Bureau of Mines.

Since then, advances in training and technology have made mine rescue safer and more effective. Today, wireless and fiber optic communication systems allow real-time discussion between rescue teams underground and officials in the surface command center.

Two years ago, mine emergency response stakeholders overwhelmingly supported creation of the national [Holmes Mine Rescue Association](#). The HMRA provides support and guidance for mine rescue to the more than 13,000 mines nationwide. It also disseminates guidelines, training and tools to the mining community.

“We owe these mining community volunteers the best training and support available. While mine safety has improved, an emergency can occur at any time that puts miners and rescuers alike at risk,” said Main.

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To learn more about mine rescue, [MSHA offers this video](#).

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